



Guinea – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 11 April 2011

Details of any violence against Catholics in Timbi Toumi or surrounding area of Guinea.

A 2005 *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* response to a request for information on the treatment of Christians in Guinea states:

“In a 27 May 2005 telephone interview, the general archivist of the Congrégation du Saint-Esprit in Chevilly-Larue (Val-de-Marne), France, a Spiritan who practised his ministry in Guinea from 1954 to 1967 and author of a recent book on the Catholic church in Guinea, provided the following information.

The Guinean population is predominantly Muslim. However, unlike the Sékou Touré (1958-84) regime, the current government authorities respect and protect all Guineans' freedom of religion. For example, the general Christian community, and the Catholic church specifically, can run their own schools, which they were unable to do under Sékou Touré. Furthermore, members of the Muslim and Christian communities live [translation] "in perfect harmony," especially in the large cities. Conversions from Islam to Christianity are rare, but they do occur and without incident. In some regions, however, particularly Fouta-Djalou, Islam is so deeply rooted that a person wanting to convert to Christianity would encounter strong social pressure and would risk being rejected by his or her community. As in a number of other African countries, Guinea is experiencing a proliferation of certain Muslim groups that are extremely radical and intolerant of other religions, including Christianity. The Guinean government is opposed to those groups.” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (27 May 2005) *GIN100074.FE – Guinea: Treatment of Christians, specifically how Muslims and Guinean society as a whole treat Muslims who convert to Christianity; available state protection (May 2005)*)

A *UN General Assembly* report, in a section titled “Background” (paragraph 10), states:

“Islam, Christianity and Animism are the three main religions and coexist harmoniously.” (UN General Assembly (3 March 2010) *National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 15 (a) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1*, p.4)

The 2010 *US Department of State* religious freedom report for Guinea, in a section titled “Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom”, states:

“There were no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice; however, in some parts of the country, strong cultural, social, and economic pressure discouraged conversion from Islam. The missionary community reported that while conversion from Islam to Christianity was allowed by the government, it sometimes resulted in rejection or persecution by families and communities.” (US Department of State (17 November 2010) *International Religious Freedom Report – Guinea*)

Reports of inter-religious violence in the Timbi Touni area of Guinea were not found among sources available to the Refugee Documentation Centre. There were reports of ethno-religious violence occurring in the city of N'Zerekore in February 2010.

The 2011 *US Department of State* country report for Guinea, in a section titled "Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life", states:

"From February 6 to 8, ethno-religious conflict in the Forest Region city of N'Zerekore resulted in the deaths of three persons: Joseph Balamou, who was beaten to death, Yakouba Keita, who was burned to death in his home, and Djefadima Kante, who died of unknown causes. At least 38 persons were injured. Local NGOs and media sources claimed the violence was primarily between Christian Guerze and Muslim Malinke youth. Security forces in N'Zerekore were unresponsive during the first day of the violence. On February 7, the head of the gendarmerie sent reinforcements who arrested an unknown number of civilians, all of whom were released within 24 hours, according to local NGOs. Unlike in previous years, there were no reports of abuse by security forces during the operation." (US Department of State (8 April 2011) *2010 Human Rights Report: Guinea*)

An *IRIN News* report on this conflict, in a paragraph headed "Slit throat, burned body", states:

"While N'zérékoré began to return to calm by 8 February attacks apparently continued. The body of a woman whose throat was slit was brought to the regional hospital on 8 February, according to a health worker who said he saw the body. Speaking on condition of anonymity, he told IRIN people who accompanied the woman – who was about 60 years old – to hospital said they were from a neighbourhood on the outskirts of the city. The health worker said the previous day he saw the burned corpse of a man who residents reported had been burned alive. The recent clashes were reportedly between Muslims and Christians in N'zérékoré; residents said the tensions take on an ethnic dimension with the people of the Malinké and Konianké ethnic groups mostly Muslim, and the Geurzé predominantly Christian. N'zérékoré (name of a region and the capital city) has seen ethnic clashes in the past, with some 100 people killed in 2001." (IRIN News (8 February 2010) *Guinea: Medical supplies, humanitarian flight blocked after clashes*)

A report published online by the South Africa-based newspaper *Times Live* states:

"Muslims set fire to food and drink shacks owned by Christians overnight Saturday to Sunday, denouncing them as 'places of prostitution and alcohol consumption,' the mosque source said. At least two Christians have now died since violence broke out Friday in Nzerekore, Guinea's second-largest city, about 1,000 kilometres (600 miles) east of the capital Conakry, according to witnesses. Some 38 Christians and Muslims have been wounded and two people are reported missing, they added. The witnesses' toll could not be verified by officials, who have so far confirmed one dead." (Times Live (7 February 2010) *Guinea Christians, Muslims in new deadly clashes*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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